

# Fashion Outlook



SHORT SKIRTS and dresses are still the look for the holiday season. From left: Honeybee's overdyed soft pink shirt (\$58) is matched with washed denim skirt (\$56); a crocodile-embossed leather belt (\$35) holds it all together. Segue into evening with this puckered-cotton version of the ubiquitous little black dress (\$158), by Regina Kravitz. For those who have yet to succumb to hiked hemlines, Beverly House for Etcetera's ribbon-plaid baggy ankle-length trouser (about \$56), with cotton big shirt (about \$48), fits the bill.

## Shopper's guide

### Short skirts are big for the holidays

By Mary Martin Niepold

Just what are winter's hottest fashion looks? The ones that women are buying most for the holiday season?

Honeybee, a specialty retail store and catalog company, is a good indicator of what women are buying. The company, which just opened its 17th store, started its retail sales in 1964; it expanded into catalog sales 10 years later. Today, Honeybee mails over 12 million catalogs five times each year. Sales in 1986 were up 64 percent over the previous year.

Honeybee's customers are mostly 25- to 44-year-old women. The company offers them more than 200 designer names, including Liz Claiborne, Calvin Klein Sport, Anne Klein, Ralph Lauren and Regina Kravitz. Styling is classic, with a fashion edge, and prices are affordable. Most accessories and separates are under \$100.

Gloria Einbender, vice president of the company's catalog division, offers some advice on smart pre-holiday fashion purchases.

Like it or not, short skirts are the item all over the country. Stores are stocking and restocking skirts of all lengths. Taking your height into consideration, look for a skirt that will hit just above your knee.

Einbender spotted the short-skirt rage early last spring.

"Working in advance with manufacturers, we pre-test trends at the retail stores," she explains. "Last spring, when short skirts were just a whisper in the wind, our buyers sensed the

coming trend and tried out a few in the New York City store, which is a fashion bellwether for us."

The buyers put 60 of the 23-inch skirts in the store; in two days, 40 had been sold. Fashion's flirtation with short skirts is still strong, says Einbender, and she recommends them as must-have fashion essentials for women this season.

A second fashion staple, she says, is a leather coat. "Those that are shearling-lined are the hottest item in our stores right now," she says. A long black leather version of this coat runs about \$798.

A far less expensive item to add to your holiday list is a cropped, boxy top. These short tops, whether knits or sweaters, are geared to accentuate shorter skirts, says Einbender. Worn with the longer jackets now in vogue, cropped tops are a quick way to update wardrobes.

If short skirts aren't your style, there are other options. You can still maintain your fashion savvy by choosing trousers. Trousers and jumpsuits have filled fashion runways recently as designers and buyers anticipate spring. Major fashion retail executives and editors have already begun wearing them.

Einbender agrees. "Going forward," she observes, "there will be lots of pants, all different kinds, from dressy weekend-wear to tight Marilyn Monroe styles."

Styles with tapered legs are in the

stores now, and will be just as fashionable come spring. They don't have to be ankle-tight, and can have elaborately or minimally pleated fronts.

The easiest, least expensive way to update your fashion wardrobe is with

accessories. Einbender recommends scarves, belts and big earrings. Specifically, that means large 36- or 45-inch floral pastel scarves; grained leather belts, preferably 2½-to-3 inches wide, with sculpted buckles; and big earrings that can be large buttons for day and "shower" styles for evening.

If you want to make specific holiday purchases that don't include sky-scraper-priced evening dresses, Einbender recommends these budget-oriented fashion choices:

- For \$300, a beautiful beaded sweater (\$200) and velvet pants or skirt (\$100).

- For \$100, "I hope she has a great black skirt and can buy a beautiful white charmeuse blouse and lurex scarf."

- For \$50, a wide stretch belt and some large dressy earrings.

Remember, looking fashionable depends more on style than on the actual amount spent. And right now, the best style — whether you're in a skirt or trousers — is one that's unmistakably feminine.

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## FASHION



Mary Martin Niepold

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